

Grant number NAGW-2869 proposed to AGSE is an adjunct to Grant NSG-5138 which was issued from Goddard Space Flight Center through the Wallops Island Facility.

The purpose of this grant was to develop an entertaining and educational program at the Boston Science Museum, Charles Hayden Planetarium for high school students from the city. Because of the many environmental factors, such as light pollution and haze, these students are not likely to observe the night sky on a regular basis or even be aware of stars and planets. The Charles Hayden Planetarium, through this program, originally entitled "Street Stars" during the development stage, strives to spark their interest in the science of astronomy.

Produced in 1992, the project was carried out in collaboration with staff members of the Planetarium. The AGSE Grant covered approximately 30% of the cost of production and was a decisive factor in the decision of the Charles Hayden Planetarium to undertake the project. The presentation was created to target the high school age group and to appeal to students who were not already interested in science, nor necessarily involved in a school science program. Through school sponsored field trips from the greater Boston area, the show was presented to high school students at special planetarium showings, throughout the school year.

During their planetarium visit, students were provided with worksheets. These worksheets contained a list of astronomical observing experiments for the students to perform. The students were asked to return the completed worksheets to the planetarium. Prizes were awarded as motivation for successfully completing the projects on the worksheets.

The show was designed in an AM, radio disk jockey show format and the original working title "Street Stars" was changed to radio station call letters "WSKY". It consisted of a multimedia presentation involving various audio and visual effects. The visual effects, such as slide projections and movie clips, were projected overhead onto the 180°-environment of the planetarium dome. In addition, music and voice overs focussing on astronomical and space topics were combined to emulate the music, news, weather, and call-in questions of a live radio broadcast. A sound track tape recording of the show is also available.

The show was determined to be successful based upon responses from attendees and teachers. In Spring 1994 the show was opened to the public for several months. The success with the public was mixed. Some people enjoyed the entertainment qualities of the presentation, while others did not like the AM radio show format.

The Charles Hayden Planetarium will continue to offer WSKY to public schools. Participation in the Planetarium program requires public schools to pay for field trip and transportation costs so future attendance depends upon the local school systems ability to provide transportation to the planetarium.